lected as the main threads of the play story. And please note that I say "threads" of the plot, for "Seventeen has more than one. It is not a drama

tion. The old story is told, not in a



By STUART WALKER.

EFORE "Seventeen" was produced almost every one even Booth Tarkington himself-inthat it wasn't the kind of of. And now that "Sevenhas proved itself a playwhich means, of course, a "successful" play-I have been asked what kind of play it is. It doesn't seem to fit absolutely into any of the usual dramatic categories-farce, sentimental drama, or such like. Yet when tested by all the college rules for playwrights it seems 100 per cent. correct. It has action, suspense, climax, characteriza-tion, denouement—every text book requirement. It is built according to Prof. Baker, for there is nothing in the play that does not grow out of what precedes it, not a line or situation put in for itself alone. Admitted, then, that it is a play-what kind is it?

I have tried to work out a short lefinition by calling it a "psychological comedy of manners," a formidable term, surely, to apply to delicate, apringlike "Seventeen." But while of a play concerned with drawing rooms and well bred people, in its strictest sense it can include the faithners of young people who live in motifs. The suburban and semi-rural United dress suit:

States, the locale of "Seventeen." And Act I.—W Seventeen" is furthermore a psychological analysis of youth personified

most exhaustive study of adolescence perience. that I know of in dramatic literature. Frank Wedekind's "Spring's Awakencence and therefore much more lim- to all girls; he meets and is dazzled ited in its fidelity to life and in its by Lola.

appeal. But "Seventeen," which deals Act II.—Willie's romantic first love with normal boys and girls, is the blinds him into thinking Lola a flawof the youth of all of us.

Of course there would never have been any play but for the book Lola can tolerate as an admirer the "Seventeen." and when Mr. Tarking- "big lummox" George Crooper. ton says that the play is not his he Act IV.-Willie realizes that Lola is means the dramatization. For his is a thoughtless flirt; whereas he gave the deep psychological analysis of her his boyish love, she wanted adadolescence: his the deliciously humor-ous "angle" of the narrative. His the And now, booming grandly beneath genius to search the mysterious heart both these themes-the "dress suit" of universal seventeen and lay it bare and the "love" themes there is the with tender raillery. And it was the adolescent or "Seventeen" motif. This broadness and depth of his work that is the broad human theme composed

The tune goes up and down the scale, suddenly with his idea of what it and finally in the last act ends on a means to be a man. Bergson has conhigh merry note, if the play be a vinced us, hasn't he, that comedy is medy, or on a low mournful note, a matter of unexpected contrasts? if a tragedy. This conception is so But at the end of the fourth act the generally accepted by our playwrights emphasis in the adolescence motif is that almost all our modern drama is transferred boldly to the man-Willie to cast realism in a theatrical mould: their characters may be human, but climax to a different key, and is con-they turn them into puppets by re-sidered a piece of daring. With a quiring them all to dance to the tune producer it is a piece of daring too, of a theatrical plot. And the result of and I have been told that four out of is—well, the result is nine out of ten nive producers would have cut out the last act. They "sum total," or general application.
And it is only when you connect some-

ransient entertainment. "Seventeen" the book had such tramendous "sum total" that it seemed to me it couldn't be entirely lost in a play. And in making the production Willie, For Willie, self-centred, sensithe watchword was "Be true to the

HIP NOW LEADS.

Charles Dillingham's gorgeous pageant of a thousand delights, "Cheer Up!" at the Hippodrome, which none can afford to miss and all can afford to see, will have the distinction this coming week of leading all other amusement successes in New York in number of performances and length of run. With the long engagement of "Oh Boy" coming to an end last week after being presented 478 times, "Cheer Up!" leads the way with a record to date of 387 capacity performances. New features are added weekly, and beginning Monday Easter novelties will be in order. Belle Story and the three hundred girls who surround her will be clothed in new spring finery, and a new musical number by Lieut. John Philip Sousa and Raymond Hubbell will be introduced with the accustomed lavishness by R. H. Burnside.

because he stated so accurately what a good joke on the other fellow; still I had always felt instinctively but the stage representation of names is never phrased. And therefore the almost as unpleasant as the reality. greatest care was used in the adapta- And such a startling, realistic scene tion and in adding the new material would be sadly out of key with the necessary to some scenes to keep ad-

solutely in the spirit of the book. Although the laughter in "Seventeen" is almost continuous — by actual count the laughs equal in number many a vaunted Broadway farce—yet not a single line or piece of business has been linearly single line or piece of business has been linearly single line or piece of business has been linearly single linearly s been injected simply for comedy. Nor maybe just the sight of gingham does any actor step out of his legitilaugh or to create a striking situation.

As I have said, a certain amount of material had to be added to the incidents in the book which had been se-

We always have six or seven curtain they try, oh, tremendously, to bring it back again.

THE NEW BOY.

Saxon Kling Is a Popular Stranger. Saxon Kling, who plays the part of

Washington Square Player. Mr. Kiling, young, blond and handsome, was born in Paulding, Ohio, but has never seen his birthplace because, he explains, his father was visiting Pauldtheatre wiseacres can't understand ing on business; his mother accompany. It is because people have not panied him, and it so happened that he been merely entertained or amused for a couple of hours. They have been hearing again the symphony of their own youth, and when the magic music uneventful except for one incident. He always teased to be taken to the in Marion.

When he was old enough he became mate characterization to secure a music, brings back youthful tragedies the lovable young scamp, Frank Gard- a freshman at Columbus University. around I joined the laugh or to create a striking situation, or pleasures long since forgotten. ner, in "Mrs. Warren's Profession" at Toward the end of his first year in 'Oh! Oh! Delphine.' the Comedy Theatre, is temporarily a college, however, he decided to come I went into vaudeville in a sketch a paint brush in my hand. She was "Come Out of the Kitchen"

(even now Mr. Kling can hardly explain how it happened) he found himber belief playing the role of Richard Hure himber belief belief by the best part himber belief by the declares to-day, many given by the same class to the same class to

continued, "we were stranded in Auburn, N. Y. I had to telegraph home under the circumstances, could 1? "But when vacation time came

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WHOLESOME."

for money; my mother wired back living in the theatre colored my mothsee some of the plays that were shown school. I couldn't do anything else grandmother has never forgiven me.

to New York to study art, but instead by May Tully; then followed the not entirely convinced, but she com-(at least five) years afterward, with unabated enthusiasm.

"After playing in 'East Lynne' with considerable artistic and more or less questionable financial success," he lights. My Grandmother Kling was a feep rooted.

The same class with Olive Tell and Phoebe Foster with the fortenancy out, as it were, a full fledged actor, was on tour with 'The Show Ship; then in Augustus Thomas's 'Rio Beaton Shakar and a feep rooted Grande': next another players to the same class with Olive Tell and Phoebe Foster with Olive

Boston Shaker, and a deep rooted Grande'; next another plunge into family prejudice against earning one's vaudeville in 'Enter a Stranger.' "Then occurred the supreme traged; theatre, and whenever he was suffi- saying he would send me a money cliently good his mother took him to order if I would promise to return to clied to my chosen calling, but my Arthur in 'Pendennis' for three weeks. anything else grandmother has never forgiven me.

could 1?

"I tried to explain to my mother thusiasm for it; then I was told I was tody I was to of myself on the stage, but that I did After that not always feel sure of myself with not always feel sure of myself with the feel

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THE ZIEGFELD FROLIC

chords. No, that isn't another way of comedy of manners" is usually used saying plot and sub-plot. It becomes clearer when I say that the chords are not random chords.

Just as in a symphony, "Seventeen" ful reflection of the customs and man- is built on several definite themes or There is the motif of the Act I.-Willie wants a dress suit.

Act II.—Willie gets a dress suit.

Act III.—Willie loses the dress suit. Act IV .- Willie acts upon knowl-I may say that "Seventeen" is the edge gained through the dress suit ex-

> Side by side with the "dress suit" motif runs the Lols Pratt love theme. Act L-Willie has stated indifference

less angel. Act III .- Willie is staggered that

seemed to set it almost beyond the as is man himself, of laughter and of tears. For three acts and a half this For most people conceive a drama theme is emphasized on its humorous as a thread—or shall I say a tune. phase—the boy in Willie contrasted

written under its influence. They try phase. In modern music such a shift is called transferring the dynamic plays we see on Broadway. It is a final scene in the last act. They play which may number many laughs might have put it back in rehearsal. or effective situations, but has not any but they would have cut it out in the

reading. And it is only when you connect some-how with your audience's personal ex-been right. But "Seventeen" is un-perience that you give it more than usual material and permits unusual treatment. And to have ended the play on a comedy note would not have been to live up to the depth of Mr. Tarkington's study of the growing up of the watchword was "Be true to the tive, desperately proud and romantic, book." Now, "in a true play only Willie is a man. And the last scene the true things are funny"—I am shows him thus—disillusioned of his infatuation for Lola, and acquiring instend a broader tenderness and understanding of love. A proud, sensitive boy who is brave enough to show his emotions to his mother and to express

his feeling for her, is a man.
But, some may object, how can a scene not in the book be true to the

I can best answer this by showing how a scene or incident in the book. if presented to the stage, would have been quite false to the spirit of the book. I refer to the incident of George Crooper and the cigarettes. As described by Mr. Tarkington, it is deliciously funny-he doesn't use many words, but they are the kind Flaubert called the "inevitable" ones. The undoing of George Crooper by "Little Sweetheart" cigarettes is as perfect a piece of vengeance as any in Greek tragedy. Why then leave it

out of the play? Because the stage presentation would have made it necessary to represent exactly and in detail what Mr. Tarkington has so delightfully suggested to the imagination. And whereas nausea is one of "nature's magnificent jokes on mankind," to

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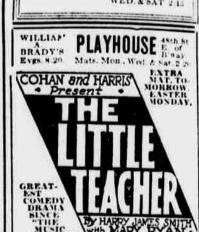
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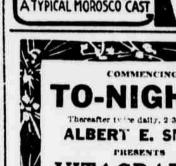


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